

CANADA'S CENTENARIAN BOTANIST.—In his delightfully puckish rejoinder "Long life to Alexander W. Evans" published in RHODORA (vol. 52, pp. 49–51, 1950) shortly before his death, Professor Fernald (I cannot call him *late*, he is so clearly with us in spirit and memory) gave an interesting list of temperate North American botanists (so far as I am aware, none was an avowed toper, though it may well be that some, like the proverbial aged Scot, enjoyed their nips or even noggins) whose life-span approached the century. The longest lived in this list were Edo Claassen and John Donnell Smith, who had each lived to 99. Fernald stated that "Rather strikingly, the century-mark seems to be rarely attained." Indeed he appears to have been unable to produce any botanical centenarian for this occasion, having to content himself with remarking that "As notable a near-centenarian as any is Hermann Christ (99 years, 11 months), the great Swiss pteridologist."

Fernald also listed (*op. cit.* p. 51) "An even more inspiring group, . . . that bevy of active workers now with us," which was ended (in point of seniority, headed) by "Alice Eastwood (91), L. H. Bailey (92), Charles F. Batchelder (94), John Dearness (98)." That was more than two years ago, and happily these four are still very much alive, contributing to our subject and in one case making a trip from California to Sweden and back alone, while very recently, on 13 May 1952, Dr. Dearness delighted his many friends and admirers by celebrating his one-hundredth birthday—apparently to become our first centenarian botanical colleague. Another hopeful aspirant is the Englishman H. N. Ridley, who Dr. E. D. Merrill reported was in excellent health and spirits on his 96th birthday last December.

John Dearness was born in Hamilton, Ontario, on May 13th, 1852, to John and Jean (*née* Linklater) Dearness, who had emigrated from the Orkney Islands. Educated at the Provincial Normal School, Toronto, and the University of Western Ontario, he obtained the B.A. and, in 1903, the M.A. of the latter institution which later on (1926) awarded him the honorary degree of LL.D. For some years he was a public school teacher and inspector in the County of Middlesex, Ontario, before becoming Vice-Principal and ultimately Principal of the Provincial Normal School in London, Ontario (where he still resides). He also lec-



tured for many years at the University of Western Ontario, at which he held the post of Professor of Biology, and acted as nature study teacher and director of various summer schools in Nova Scotia and Ontario.

A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dr. Dearness is a past president (1937) of the Mycological Society of America, of the Canadian Division of the American Phytopathological Society, of the Ontario Historical Association (1912–14), of the Ontario Educational Association (1896), and of the Ontario Entomological Society (1897–98). He also acted for some time as Associate Editor of "Mycologia" and of "Nature Study Review." Among his more important botanical papers have been his "New or noteworthy North American Fungi" (1917) and his "Fungi" (1923) in the "Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913–18," and among his best known publications prepared jointly with other mycologists are the books "The Fungi of Manitoba" (1929) and "The Fungi of Manitoba and Saskatchewan" (1938), and the series "New species of Canadian Fungi" (1893–99) and "New or noteworthy species of Fungi" (1918–40); also notable was his "Report on fleshy Fungi collected in August, 1926" in J. D. Soper's "A faunal investigation of southern Baffin Island" (1928), which was the first authoritative report of any substantial number of Fungi from that largest island of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago.

As zoological and other scientific friends seem unable to produce a precedent from among their ranks, it is a pleasure again to hail our gentle science as a particularly good preserver, and a matter of pride and satisfaction to say "long life to John Dearness, centenarian botanist."—NICHOLAS POLUNIN. GRAY HERBARIUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

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NEW NAMES FOR WYOMING WHEATGRASSES.<sup>1</sup>—During preparation of a Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station bulletin entitled "The Wheatgrasses of Wyoming" (Bulletin 312, Wyoming Agric. Expt. Station, in press) it has been found necessary

<sup>1</sup> Published with approval of the director, Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station, as Journal Paper No. 13.